

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1888

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS : CASC, MX

SUBJECT : CASE REVIEW OF ALL AMERICAN PRISONERS IN MEXICO:
COLLINS, TODD JOHN

REF : STATE 194199

1. DENIAL OF CONSULAR ACCESS: PER STARK MATERIAL, COLLINS ALLEGES HE WAS NOT ALLOWED TO CALL EMBASSY, LAWYER, OR FAMILY AT TIME OF ARREST 12/8/73. ACCORDING TO POST FILES, EMBASSY LEARNED OF ARREST BY NEWSPAPER STORY 12/9/73 AND WROTE COLLINS 12/11/73 INDICATING CONOFF HAD BEEN UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH HIM, SENDING LIST OF ATTORNEYS AND OFFERING ASSISTANCE. REPORT OF FIRST CONOFF VISIT 1/29/74 CONTAINS STATEMENT "HE DID NOT TRY TO CONTACT US." PROBLEM OF EARLY CONSULAR ACCESS IS MATTER OF SERIOUS CONCERN WHICH EMBASSY CONTINUES TO ADDRESS IN CONTACTS WITH MEXICAN OFFICIALS AT ALL LEVELS.

2. PROLONGED PRE-TRIAL DETENTION: PER STARK MATERIAL AND POST FILES, COLLINS HAS NOW BEEN DETAINED TWO YEARS WITHOUT SENTENCE. ACCORDING TO POST FILES CASE WAS COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT ADDITIONAL CHARGES WERE FILED AGAINST COLLINS FOLLOWING DISCOVERY 9/3/74 OF SMALL QUANTITY OF MARIJUANA IN MAIL ADDRESSED TO HIM. EMBASSY (WITH COLLINS PERMISSION) SENT DIPLOMATIC NOTE 5/16/75 PROTESTING PROLONGED DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL OF COLLINS AND OTHER PRISONERS. NO REPLY RECEIVED. ON 10/11/75 EMBASSY SENT LETTER TO JUDGE POINTING OUT LENGTHY DETENTION
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AND REQUESTING INFO ON STATUS OF CASE.

3. MISTREATMENT FOLLOWING ARREST: PER STARK MATERIAL AND POST FILES, COLLINS NEVER INDICATED HE PERSONALLY HAD BEEN MISTREATED FOLLOWING ARREST. IN LETTER WRITTEN TO SENATOR TUNNEY 3/29/74, COLLINS COMPLAINED IN GENERAL TERMS OF VIOLATION OF PRISONERS' RIGHTS, "HORRIBLE" CONDITIONS IN LECUMBERRI, AND COMMON PRACTICE OF TORTURE TO INDUCE CONFESSIONS. LETTER DID NOT SPECIFY ANY ALLEGATIONS OF MISTREATMENT OF COLLINS HIMSELF. STARK MATERIAL CONTAINS LETTER FROM FRIEND DATED 9/12/74 ALLEGING COLLINS WAS PHYSICALLY ABUSED AFTER ARREST TO INDUCE CONFESSION. CONSIDERING LACK OF SPECIFIC COMPLAINT BY COLLINS NO ACTION APPEARS APPROPRIATE.

4. MISTREATMENT IN PRISON: ACCORDING TO EMBASSY FILES, EMBASSY RECEIVED REPORTS IN SEPTEMBER 1974 FROM MOTHER OF ANOTHER PRISONER AND FROM COLLINS' FAMILY THAT COLLINS (A) HAD COMMITTED SUICIDE WHILE IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT AND (B) WAS BEING BRUTALLY BEATEN AND MISTREATED AND HIS LIFE WAS IN DANGER. CONOFF IMMEDIATELY VERIFIED BY TELEPHONE WITH PRISON OFFICIALS THAT COLLINS WAS WELL AND HAD BEEN RELEASED FROM SOLITARY. ON CONOFF VISIT FOLLOWING WEEK, COLLINS HAD NO COMPLAINTS, LAUGHED AT RUMOR OF HIS SUICIDE, AND ATTRIBUTED RUMOR TO "EXAGGERATED REPORTS GOING OUT OF LECUMBERRI BY WAY OF SOME OF THE INMATES'S MOTHERS". JOVA

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